# ROSCIUS:

OR, A

## CRITICAL EXAMINATION,

INTO THE

MERITS of all the principal PERFORMERS,

BELONGING TO

*NORWICH THEATRE.*

*For the laſt Seaſon.*

*The* SECOND EDITION, *with* Additions *and* Corrections.

By *D. PINN.*

NORWICH:

Printed and ſold by S. WHITE, Magdalen-Street; and by the Bookſellers in Town.

MDCCLXVII.

46
9 4
240

# ROSCIUS.

LATELY my muſe, through various errors led,
Frequent diſputes among the Critics bred;
Who each poor line condemn'd by mood and tenſe,
Wreſted the meaning, and deſtroy'd the ſenſe:
But know, ye Witlings, Scandal's apteſt tools,
Who judge of merit by pedantic rules;
In ſpite of all you've ſaid, or yet can ſay,
Of all your ſpleen gave birth, or what it may;
Urg'd by reſentment, I've reſum'd the quill,
With equal right, if not an equal ſkill.
O that we had, (beyond my humble rhymes)
A POPE, to ſcourge the follies of the times;
From *Norwich*, only, might a *Dunciad* riſe,
Nor One be cenſur'd on a weak ſurmiſe:
Fools might be found, if Fools he'd wiſh to meet,
In numbers daily traverſing each Street:

Then You, ye far fam'd Cenſors of the *Pit*,‡
In whom conceit ſupplies the place of wit;
Might ſee enroll'd your Folly as it grew,
Drawn from obſcurity to public view.
*Dennis*,* by ALD——SON, depriv'd of fame,
Should yield precedence to a greater name:
Nor be thy muſe, O ROB——SON! forgot!
Thoſe well wrote Satires, with ſuch keenneſs fraught,
And, (more than thoſe) thy *Novel* §, tho' condemn'd,
So much for Inſipidity contemn'd;
Where neither Elegance, nor Humour lives,
Which neither Mirth nor cordial Pathos gives;
Forbid thy genius ſhou'd oblivion meet,
Thy merits weigh'd, take *Gildon's*† vacant ſeat!

To bear *his* part, and thy affections ſoothe,
Thy brazen Oracle, the brainleſs BO—TH,
Vers'd in deceit, a Sycophant confeſt,
To whom Truth's fabulous, and friendſhip jeſt,
With equal fame, might fill an *Oſborne's*¶ chair,
In whom an equal Ign'rance may appear.

SAY

‡ The Perſons here pointed at, are of two Claſſes; both which may be conſider'd as *Peſts* of a THEATRE. Some tho' not able to read, take a ſovereign Pleaſure in openly criticiſing the Performers. — Others expoſe their Ignorance in ludicrous obſervations, remarks on the Audience, and ſhifting from one part of the Houſe to another. In the firſt Claſs, thoſe two Gentlemen mark'd in capitals, may be number'd; the other are below all Cenſure. § CHARLES CHANCE.

* † ¶ Three Perſons, celebrated in Mr. POPE's *Dunciad*; the two firſt for illnatur'd Criticiſms; the laſt for his Ignorance and Impudence.

SAY, if thou can'ſt, what ill deſigning rage
Betrays thy rooted rancour to the ſtage?
Why brand with infamy an Actor's name?
It would become thee beſt (tho' loſt to ſhame!)
At leaſt to bridle thy licentious prate,
Nor court their cuſtom, ſince the men you hate.
Think'ſt thou thy malice, (for I know it ſo!)
Will e'er create one worthy man their foe;
As well might C——, (whoſe ſcurril lays
Preſum'd ſuperior merit to diſpraiſe,)
To laſting fame aſſert the leaſt pretence,
Or claim the Laurel, from a breach of ſenſe.

YE wou'd be Wits, who ſnarling, fain wou'd bite,
More wretched lines* (if poſſible) indite;
Compoſe new Epigrams, for Bo—TH to find,
The envious workings of a narrow mind,
Write on; diſcharge the venom in thy breaſt,
I'll meet undaunted, what I muſt——deteſt.
Of them no more. Not worth a farther thought——
My future ſubject, from the Drama's brought.

CURS'D be the Muſe, but doubly curs'd the Bard,
Whom envy prompts all Merit to diſcard,
To trace the ſmalleſt Error to its ſource,
Call it a fault, and make that fault much worſe:



* Alluding to ſome ſcandalous lines, wrote againſt the firſt Edition, diſpers'd by that Perſon, and afterwards printed in hand bills.

Largely deſcant upon the leaſt offence,
And ſtile it want of decency and ſence:
Critics, with envy, never ſhou'd engage,
Or ſtain their lines with infamy and rage.
So *Kelly* wrote, and malice wing'd his muſe
Beyond all cenſure, down to rank abuſe.

To mark true merit on the living page,
Kindly to hand it down from age to age;
Which altho' great, may unrecorded lie,
And gen'uine worth may diſregarded die:
Pity from what we once could pleaſure find,
To charm the ſenſes, and improve the mind;
That no ſurviving Beauty can be found,
Able to ſpread its Eulogies around!
Aſſert its claim to everlaſting fame,
And tell futurity the Actor's name.

THESE are my motives, and with this intent,
Have made my *Roſcius* on his Sons comment;
Prais'd each perfection, that I could diſcern,
And drew their failings with a kind concern.——
But where no ſpecious merit croſt my aim,
Have found no room to cenſure or condemn.

GAINST GRIFFITH, tho' in Comedy renown'd,
What infinite objections have been found!
But then by whom? By none, the Bard replies,
Who're over-candid, or who're over-wiſe.

But

But when ſome private pique let envy looſe,
*Not Satire that, but Scandalous abuſe.**
Proceed then GRIFFITH, ſuch mean arts deſpiſe,
In ſpite of Slander, ſhall thy merits riſe——
Juſt to thy powers, due reward receive;
In ARCHERS, ATALLS, RANGERS, WILDAIRS live:
Or when in BRASS, or PLUME; ſee paid at will
In gen'ral plaudits, homage to thy ſkill.

WHY can'ſt thou then, without the leaſt pretence,
Miſtake thy talents, and arraign thy ſenſe?
Lo! ſome bold Veteran, renown'd in arms,
Inur'd to marches, ſkilful in alarms,
Compleat with ev'ry military art;
Eager for action, of intrepid heart,
Fearleſs of death, the Trumpet's ſound attend,
Bears on the Foe, nor ever heeds his end.
Now ſhou'd this Man, to counteract his fate,
(Although in this department truly great)
Vainly attempt a naval pow'r to guide,
Cruize o'er the Main, or rule upon the Tide.
'Though great diſaſters, might his ſteps enthral,
Contempt, not Pity, wou'd attend his fall.

So, ever GRIFFITH when thou quit'ſt thy ſphere,
And 'gainſt thyſelf, in Tragedy appear; I

* This Line was addreſs'd to Mr. POPE, on his ridiculing the Perſon of JAMES MOORE SMYTH, Eſq. in the *Dunciad*, in excuſe for which, that Gentleman afterwards publicly declar'd, he was not the Author of ſuch maltreatment, tho' it was evident he gave a Sanction to it, by a publication in his own writings.

I need not tell with what regret thou'rt ſeen,
'Tis plainly ſhewn, that ſtill a WILDAIR's mein,
Betrays the honours, all uſurp'd thou bear'ſt,
And ſpite of dignity a RANGER wear'ſt.
In gayer Scenes of life, thy merit's ſhewn,
Let grave, ſententious SOMERVILLE, alone;
But if to humour, thou aſſert'ſt a Claim,
An OGLEBY ſhall aggrandize thy Name;
With pleaſure there thou may'ſt be ſtill receiv'd,
And what thou'ſt loſt by error, be retriev'd.

WHERE Nature teaches Actors how to play,
And plain good ſenſe marks out th'unering way;
Reaſon, with judgement equally combin'd,
To ſpeak the labours of the Poet's mind;
Lively to feel the Character he bears,
And be no more, than what he then appears:
Where qualities ſo rare as theſe unite,
And point out ſterling merit to our ſight;
Deſerv'd applauſe muſt come to grace the Man,
Who builds his fame upon ſo juſt a plan.

'Tis thine, then HOLLAND, eminently thine,
In FALSTAFF, in a FAIRFIELD, ſtill to ſhine!
Recall thoſe Scenes ſo lately we beheld,
With SHAKESPEAR's wit, and real humour fill'd:
With pleaſure ſaw preſented to our view,
The only FALSTAFF, *Norwich* ever knew.
Or in that face with what expreſſive Boaſt,
Lives a reſemblance of the *Litchfield* HOST;

With

With equal grace his FLIP, or WRONGHEAD, ſhin'd;
Yet equal merit in his STERLING find.

BUT when, (O with what gladneſs wou'd the Muſe
Amidſt ſuch worth, a ſingle failing loſe)
When thou *Granada's* KING, art doom'd t'appear,
Or *Denmark's* CLAUDIUS,* in thy Port to bear;
How little qualify'd for regal pride,
Not all thy judgement, or thy care can hide;
Thy form, thy mein, thy very looks proclaim
Such Characters, unſuited to thy fame.

So often have with dignity miſplac'd,
Our tragic Princes, Sovereigns ~~been~~ diſgrac'd:
And thinking Splendour will alone ſuffice,
Forgot both King, and Player, in a trice.——

BUT leſt my Muſe ſhou'd here forſake her plan,
And fir'd by Cenſure, ſhou'd degrade the man,
On whom before ſhe gave ſuch praiſes birth,
Extoll'd his merit, and enlarg'd his Worth;
No thirſt for praiſe, in Characters like thoſe,
Leads into Error, or creates him foes;
——Since then the Ermine he's conſtrain'd to wear,
Howe'er it may offend, the Actor ſpare.

WHEN Age, enfeebled and afflicted mourns,
The toils of ADAM, or SCIOLTO's groans,
Suit DOWNING's perſon and declining pow'rs:
There, and there only, can he pleaſe for hours.



* Vide *Hamlet*.

WHERE INDIANA, conſcious that ſhe loves,
The ſofteſt paſſion for her BEVIL, proves;
Who but in SEALAND, DOWNING muſt admire,
When from the Bracelet, he appears the Sire:
There filial love, (ſtampt ſtrongly on his face)
Diſpel ſuſpicion, calumny eraſe:
Pleas'd, he receives her to a Parent's arms,
Adore's her virtues, and admires her charms.

BUT when a HAMLET, or a ROMEO's youth,
Calls out for vigour, and demands the truth;
Then, to ſee DOWNING, muſt excite our rage;
Who ſpent and breathleſs pants about the Stage.——
Behold that face, ſo bloated with exceſs,
That voice decay'd, which ſcarcely marks the Streſs,
Through DORILANT's ſenſations, languid pine;
Or Age infirm in LOVEMORE, ſtrive to ſhine.

IF true politeneſs in a part can charm,
Or ſenſe, and elegance, attention arm;
Tell us, where more compleatly they combine,
Than where Sir CHARLES, thro' *Cibber's* genius ſhine!
When the fair MODISH, captivates our Eyes,
Sir CHARLES's Wit, and Raillery we prize;
Or when to injur'd virtue, he atones,
Her wrongs redreſs, and all his Folly owns.
What nameleſs graces, here, the Poet ſhew'd!
What graces once, from *Wilks's* action flow'd!
*Wilks* tho' no more, yet many Actors ſince,
Have juſtly glory'd in applauſe from thence.

Let

Let then oblivion kindly caſt a ſhade
O'er DOWNING's mem'ry, nor my pen degrade
Talents, the Muſe, perhaps might once adore;
(However true,) I fear can pleaſe no more!

IN fam'd MACHEATH, unſeen, theſe many Years,
Now firſt reſtor'd, Lo! BANNISTER, appears;
Above, below, around, attraction draws,
Attentive ſilence, burſting to applauſe;
Pregnant in merit from each line that flows,
With manly pride, the gallant ruffian glows!
From the bold robber, no fine tortur'd note,
Seems now to warble thro' an Enuch's throat;
By nature, form'd to grace the muſe of *Gay*.
With native energy he fills the Lay.

NOR do we feel leſs pleaſure or delight,
(Nor leſs thy Merit, nor leſs pleas'd our ſight;)
To view thy worth in the fantaſtic ſcene,
The humourous ſallies of a Mimic's brain;
And if ordain'd thro' comic ſcenes to rove,
Who but thy FACE,* or GIBBY, muſt approve?
Pleas'd with thy HAWTHORN; BELLAFONT, adore:
Or let thy talents, if they aſk for more,
Set (in SILENO,) Hundreds in a roar.

OR, ſhou'd the tragic Muſe demand thy aid,
To graver Scenes in eloquence array'd;
Tho' much unequal to thy former fame,
Revolving time ſhall dignify thy name.



* Vide *The Alchymiſt.*

Behold fierce OSMAN, drawn by great *Voltaire*,
Too proud to love; yet conquer'd by the Fair!
Rack'd i'th' extreme, the ſharpeſt anguiſh bears——
Now thinks he's lov'd, and now again deſpairs!
Plunges in vengeance; ſtern remorſe ſucceeds;
The ruin'd, great, unhappy Sultan bleeds!

IF here, or in a BAJAZET, thou'rt ſeen,
Th' inhuman GLOSTER,* or tyranic DANE;†
Then that proud port, and fixt imperious look,
Betrays no ſtep of dignity miſtook,
There, thoſe furl'd features; and indignant brows,
With native force, majeſtic terror ſhows.

BUT, when ſome tend'reſt paſſion claims thy care,
Prompted by love, and yet reſtrain'd by fear;
When all conſpires to tenderneſs and truth,
The joys of beauty, or the charms of youth;
Thou ſeem'ſt, (unfit in Scenes like thoſe t'engage)
The coldeſt Lover, in the warmeſt Age.

IF thy ſoft ſenſes, Muſic's power can charm,
And ſtrength of Sound, to admiration warm;
High with eſteem, DU-BELLAMY, ſhall ſtand
In firm ſupport, nor dread the Critic's wand;
Shall, ſince his talents have ſuch praiſes bore,
Be long regretted, that he's here no more.

FORM'D ſtill to pleaſe in Characters, alone
Where the pert Coxcomb, bends to Folly's throne;

See

* JANE SHORE. † *Maſque of* ALFRED.

See DEATH, conſtrain'd to quit his native caſt,
And ſeek for fame, where it can never laſt:
With tortur'd Tragedy, his parts abuſe,
And what he wins in one, in t'other loſe,

THAT merit, which we ſee from PRATTLE riſe,
Lo! quickly chang'd, in brave NERESTAN dies;
Whilſt WITLING's praiſes meet as dire a doom,
When we behold MONESES, or CHAMONT.

CONFIN'D to Comedy, with time his friend,
We yet may have no little to commend;
Our unripe hopes a Harveſt may attain,
And bleſt with ſenſe, no ſmall improvement gain.

CHALMERS, a Vet'ran in the comic ſcene;
Approv'd by all, have long reſpected been;
In ſome odd compound, quite grown gray with Age,
Some doating Fool, who yet would fain be ſage;
There CHALMERS' talents, e'er excite our mirth,
And ev'ry auditor admires his worth.
See (in attention to a *Summer's Tale*)
How far the force of humour can prevail!
With pleaſing wonder, on Sir 'TONY, gaze,
And hear around one univerſal praiſe.

IF Laughter juſtly teſtifies applauſe,
When riſing truly from a worthy Cauſe;
And not (where rules of decency are broke)
Sprung from ſome low, unmeaning, vulgar joke;

CHALMERS

CHALMERS in MIDAS muſt his ſhare receive,
And ſettled in eſteem his fame ſhall live.

OR when, (th'important ſecret juſt at hand)
Immers'd in ſhame, Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT ſtand!
When as a Friend, on LOVEMORE he repoſe,
And confidently tell him all he knows; ——
There ſtrong conception in each feature ſhewn,
Speaks the Comedian, and his merit's known.

YET one great fault, I eaſily deſcry,
By much too gen'ral to eſcape the Eye;
A tireſome ſameneſs, thro' his acting ſhewn,
Betrays too many Characters in one.

CROUSE when diſplay'd in the illit'rate Clown,
Is e'er receiv'd with pleaſure by the Town,
In HODGE or TOUCHSTONE, never fails to pleaſe,
With comic mirth each hum'rous breaſt to ſeize.
But often as thou'ſt injur'd GLOSTER* took;
As oft we've wiſh'd thee Lady WRANGLE's Cook,
Or when condemn'd thy BUCKINGHAM to ſee;
Have rather wiſh'd thoud'ſt honeſt SACKBUT be.
Yet be adviſ'd, and incoherence fly,
Lay CAPULET's, and RODORIGO's by;
Firmly ſupported in thy proper caſt,
Without a further aid, thy fame ſhall laſt.

WRIGHT,

* Vide K. *Lear*.

WRIGHT, may in Pantomime, our fancy charm,
May pleaſe our ſight, or elſe our fears alarm;
Through the wide round of groteſque whimſies range,
While Scenes delight us, or Machin'ry change.

BUT if we'd raiſe alone the Actor's name;
His RALPH's the only candidate for fame:
There inbred rudeneſs, ſet in brutal eaſe,
In WRIGHT's performance, may be taught to pleaſe.
His cauſe yet reſts on pantomimic ſkill——
But Merit's Merit; be it where it will.

Now tenfold Candour, doubly nerve each thought,
To mark the page with Female ſtrictures fraught;
A nat'ral impulſe leads us to commend,
With genial warmth, a ſomething more than Friend;
Seeks to exalt all real Merit higher,
And where we cannot praiſe, would fain admire!

WHEN raging anguiſh, or a deep deſpair.
The inmoſt horrors of the ſoul declare;
The matchleſs graces of an IBBOT's mein,
Enlarge the thought, and dignify the Scene.

HENCE, great ELIZA charms upon the ſtage.
(Her England's pride, and Wonder of the Age)
LADY MACBETH with horror meets our Eyes:
From HEIDELBERG, what Floods of humour riſe!
Look thro' the round of Characters ſhe bears,
(Bleſt with applauſe) what gen'uine worth appears:

Extenſive

Extenſive merit, varioully great,
From LADY RANDOLPH, down to MUSLIN's Prate!

WHEN DOUGLAS falls, what ſympathetic woe,
Does the loſt Mother on each Heart beſtow?
To what advantage, does ſhe then appear?
How great the Plaudit, in each falling tear!

THO' LOVEGOLD, charm'd us in a *Weſton*'s days,
IBBOT, in LAPPET, met with equal praiſe;
Equally great they fixt attention drew;
From Bench, to Bench, th'applauding whiſper flew.
Whether in comic ſcenes t'enlarge our mirth,
Or give in Tragedy the Paſſions birth;
Still IBBOT's num'rous requiſites we prize,
And view her Fame on deathleſs columns riſe.

IF inborn ſenſe, and elegance can pleaſe,
With native dignity, and winning eaſe;
(A ſtanding Fav'rite of intrinſic worth,)
We bleſs the hour that gave a CHALMERS birth.
Through that ſweet Voice, pathetic accents glide,
From DARNLEY's WIDOW †, or the MOURNING BRIDE;
Can teach the brighteſt Eye to ſhed a tear:
Each tender boſom to confeſs a fear.

IN Sir CHARLES EASY's or Lord TOWNLY's Wife;
(Contraſted ſcenes of elevated Life!)
Where One, domeſtic happineſs diſowns,
Charm'd by the reigning Follies of gay Towns. With

† *Mary* QUEEN *of Scots*

With ev'ry grace, with ev'ry virtue flor'd,
The other ſighs, but to reclaim her Lord.
In each, with what diſtinction CHALMERS ſhines!
But happier ſtill, in *Milton*'s heartfelt lines.
See in ſupreme diſtreſs, TH'ENCHANTED MAID*,
Beneath the pow'r of Vice, and Magic laid.
Unconquer'd ſtill, to Virtue's precepts true;
With indignation, the curs'd Sorc'rer view!
A juſt diſdain her ſwelling Boſom fires,
Impetuous warmth, her noble ſoul inſpires!

ON that fine Form, with raptur'd influence gaze,
And grace ſuch merit, with mellifluent praiſe:
Were *Milton* living, he'd thy worth rehearſe,
And make thy Name, immortal as the Verſe.

UNFOLD, what Form now greets our raviſh'd ſight
In ~~walk~~ *Thalia*'s, with ~~exſtreme~~ delight;
'Tis BROOKS! Chief Fav'rite of the comic Muſe;
Her fitteſt Agent to let laughter looſe.
Whoſe parts, ſo well adapted to the taſk,
As ne'er to charm, diſrob'd of humour's maſk.

SEE, in thoſe coarſe, diſpleaſing Scenes of life
A low bred AUDREY, or SILENO'S WIFE,
The Shrew or Ruſtic admirably ſhewn,
Shall grace her talents with a juſt renown.

NOT only theſe, but various walks beſide,
In ſervile Pertneſs†, ſupercilious Pride §, The

* *The Lady in Comus.* † *Filletta. Wiſhwell. Betty.* &c. § *Lady Sycamore.*

Thy matchleſs genius, equal luſtre ſhews,
And each impartial voice, thy fame allows.
Or if a DORCAS, if a DEB'RAH'S ‡ ſeen,
That native humour, that expreſſive mein,
Demands applauſe, while eager to obey,
Our willing hands a grateful tribute pay.

BUT here, O BROOKS! be rul'd, nor e'er preſume
To quit thy ſphere, another to aſſume;
A wide deficiency throughout a part,
Can ne'er attract the Eye, nor reach the Heart;
Unleſs with juſt diſdain t'excite our rage,
And to deteſt what never can engage.

THERE was a time, when PEARSON'S worth admir'd,
(Tho' now She's almoſt from the Stage retir'd)
Had claim'd a rank with others I have nam'd;
Been prais'd as much, and equally been fam'd!
And ſtill to ſome few Characters confin'd,
Not to regard that merit, were unkind.

FROM thoſe, who with unbais'd thoughts regard
A Dawn of merit, worthy a reward;
The GYPSEY,* play'd by HOLLAND, claims applauſe,
Infuſes mirth, and their attraction draws:
And ſearching further, we that fame to raiſe,
In other Scenes, find further room for praiſe.

As

‡ *Mrs. Deborah* WOODCOCK. * *In the* MAID *of the* MILL.

Her merit yet too young wou'd not decide,
So lately known, nor by Experience try'd,
The Muſe to DOWNING wiſhes, as a friend,
That fair Succeſs, may all her ſteps attend.

WHEN DEATH to pleaſe us treads the vocal round;
Theſe wou'd be Critics often have I found,
Captious of failings, to diſguſt our ſight,
Extol perhaps a *Vincent*, or a *Wright*; §
Commend a *Mattocks*, *Brent* † with rapture name;
And add new trophies to their well known fame.
Vain of their judgement, (O how vain indeed!)
To ſome illtim'd compariſon proceed——

BUT there are ſome ſo rigidly unkind,
Who ever will be to perfections blind;
Prone to detraction, never will commend!
Like Foe invet'rate, but a lukewarm Friend.
Can't PATTY's ſoftneſs feelingly expreſt,
By rival paſſions, tenderly diſtreſt;
The gay MARIA's or ROSSETTA's love,
Excite regard, or win you to approve?
Yet ſhou'd they fail, I'd ſtill enhance her name,
And build her praiſe on more ſubſtantial fame;
Whatever fate the Singer might receive,
Mindful of merit, bid the Actreſs live.

TURN

§ *Now Mrs.* ARNE *of Drury-Lane.* † *Mrs.* PINTO *of Covent-Garden.*

TURN to where *Vanbrugh's* looſer morals pleaſe,
When triply arm'd with ſpirit, wit, and eaſe;
From young CORINA, what applauſe deriv'd!
(And wou'd ſtill more, were the RELAPSE reviv'd.)
When Crouds by MIDAS ſummon'd, throng'd each Night,
Did not this DEATH give infinite delight *?
Did not her praiſe conſpicuouſly grow?
Did not her worth luxuriantly flow?
Who could behold that Face and not applaud?
Nor give that well turn'd action due reward?
Or when the artleſs fond AMYNTOR ſighs,
Allow her merits in a DAPHNE riſe;
How ev'ry action from each feature charms?
How ev'ry breaſt with admiration warms?

NAY, even Scenes, which boaſt of little worth,
Thro' Her, we've known exaggerate our mirth;
Simplicity and Fear † engroſs the Eye,
And well the worth of ſolid ſenſe ſupply!

IT has been urg'd, (perhaps with juſtice too)
My Muſe prov'd partial to the female few;
Conceal'd their Errors, and proclaim'd alone
The ſeveral Spheres, in which their talents ſhone;
I'd own the crime, cou'd it a crime be found,
E'er envy ſpoke, and ſlander catch'd the ſound!
But if miſmanagement for cenſure calls,
And if that cenſure, on the Actors falls, Oft

* *In the* Daphne *of that Burletta.* † *Alludes to a Scene in the* Clandeſtine Marriage.

Oft as oblig'd a Character to play,
Which nature never ſuited to their way,
Thro' illtim'd rigour, DEATH herſelf might fall;
Great tho' her talents! tho' admir'd by all!

WHENE'ER ~~thou'ſt~~ thrust on, that merit to eraſe;
In cold LUCINDA‡, or in LADY GRACE,
Altho reſentment, may each breaſt alarm,
Let riper candour your opinion arm:
Think how her worth, ſo often charm'd our view!
How pleaſing oft, our fixt attention drew!
In juſtice to her fame, ſupport her cauſe,
And yield the crown of merited applauſe!

THUS, have I freely canvas'd every Name,
Who claim'd the ſmalleſt Article of fame;
Carefully trod with caution to the End,
Nor in the Critic ever loſt the Friend.
Here then I reſt.——And to the candid few,
Humbly preſent this firſt Eſſay to view;
To them alone. —— I *their* inſpection crave;
And their remarks wou'd gratefully receive:
No prepoſſeſſions grovelling and poor,
Biaſs my Mind to gloſs its Errors o'er:
Juſt to my plan, "Impartial to decide;"
The diff'rent Actors, diff'rent merits try'd.

BEYOND my Title's promiſe to relate,
'Muſt leave our new performers to their fate;

Elſe

Else had my Muse a WESTRAY's worth proclaim'd;
With pleasure else; her various merits nam'd:
Mark'd what pathetic tenderness we find,
With sensibility and beauty join'd;
Display'd her various qualities to please,
Her winning softness, and enchanting Ease.

ELSE had MOZEEN and DAVIES; claim'd their share;
Shou'd due degrees of praise or censure bear——
But since deny'd, accept my wish instead;
May their attempts, as they desire, succeed:
For when an Audience, a dislike reveal,
None but an Actor knows what Actors feel!

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM